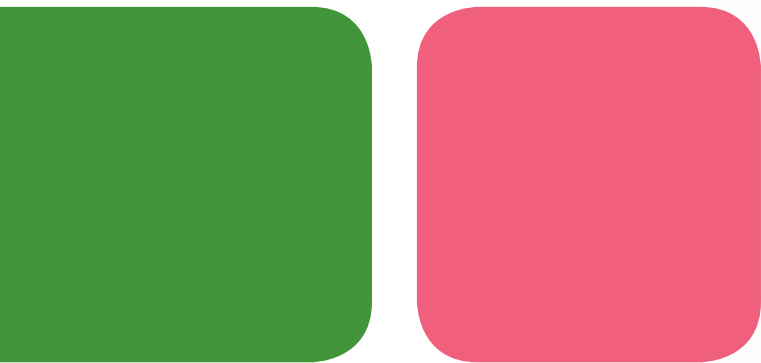


# Early School Years Fact Pack

**A Guide for  
School Staff**



*Formerly known as The Spastic Centre*

For people with **cerebral palsy** and their families.

# early school years **Fact Pack**



*Formerly known as The Spastic Centre*

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# early school years fact pack

This fact sheet pack has been developed to assist teachers, teacher's aides, students and parents in learning more about what might be helpful for children with cerebral palsy in the early school years.

The pack was developed in response to commonly asked questions and requests by teachers for information about cerebral palsy. The fact sheets are designed to be an introduction to the topics and are not exhaustive. The needs of students should be considered on an individual basis with support from appropriate services as required.

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*The fact sheets have been designed for teachers who have students with cerebral palsy in their class but may be relevant for students with other physical disabilities.*



# What is Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a permanent physical condition that affects movement.

There are three main types of CP and each involves the way a child moves. Movements can be unpredictable, muscles can be stiff or tight and in some cases children can have shaky movements or tremors. CP can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to almost complete lack of movement.

Children with CP may have seizures and other impairments affecting their speech, vision, hearing and/or intellect.

CP, except in its mildest forms, can be seen in the first 12-18 months of life. It presents when children fail to reach movement milestones. Babies most at risk of cerebral palsy are those born prematurely or with low birth weight.

In Australia it is estimated that a child is born with CP every 15 hours. Worldwide, the incidence of CP is the same - 1 in 400 births. There is no known cure and severity is on the increase. For most, the cause of CP is unknown.

## Types of CP

There are three main types of CP:

**Spastic cerebral palsy** - This is the most common type of CP. Spasticity means stiffness or tightness of muscles. The muscles are stiff because the message to the muscles is sent incorrectly through the damaged part of the brain.

When students without CP perform a movement, some groups of muscles become tighter and some groups of muscles relax. In students with spastic CP, both groups of muscles may become tighter. This makes movement difficult or even impossible.

**Athetoid cerebral palsy** - Athetosis is the word used for involuntary unpredictable movements that occur in this type of CP. This involuntary movement is present even at rest and is often most noticeable when the person moves. Students with athetoid cerebral palsy often have very weak muscles or feel floppy when carried.

**Ataxic cerebral palsy** - This is the least common type of CP. Ataxia is the word used for unsteady shaky movements or tremor. Students with ataxia also have trouble keeping their balance.

*Many children do not have just one type, but a mixture of several of these movement patterns.*

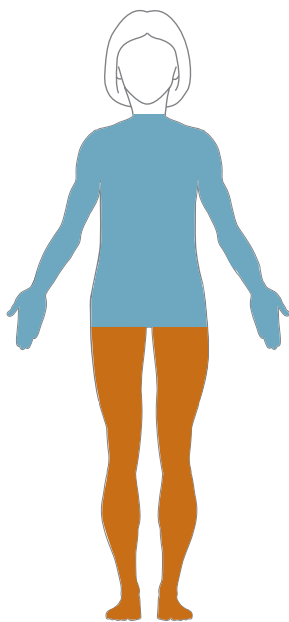
## What part of the body is affected by CP?

This is different from one person to another. In CP, certain words are used to describe the parts affected:

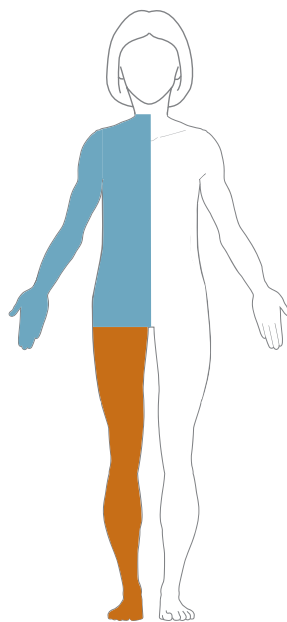
- Hemiplegia** - the leg and arm on one side of the body are affected. See Factsheet 14 for more information about Hemiplegia.
- Diplegia** - both legs are affected significantly more than the arms. Students with diplegia usually have some clumsiness with their hand movements.
- Quadriplegia** - Both arms and legs are affected. The muscles of the trunk, face and mouth can also be affected.

## What causes CP?

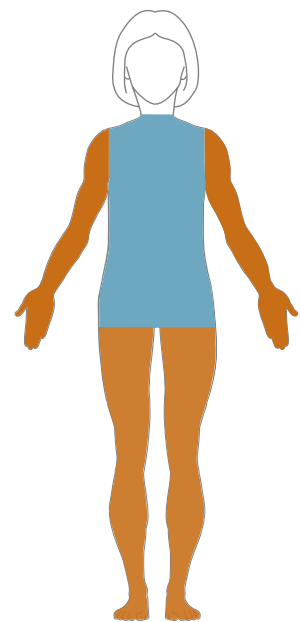
Parts of the body affected by cerebral palsy



diplegia



hemiplegia



quadriplegia



more affected areas



less affected areas

the developing brain, usually before birth. For most children with CP, the cause is unknown.

The risk is greater in babies born preterm and with low birthweight. Whilst the reasons for this remain unclear, CP may occur as a result of problems associated with preterm birth or may indicate an injury has occurred during the pregnancy that has caused the baby to be born early.

In some cases, damage to the brain may occur:

- in the early months of pregnancy, for example, if the mother is exposed to certain infections such as German Measles
- due to the baby not growing at the correct rate during the pregnancy
- at any time if there is a lack of oxygen supplied to the baby. This is of particular concern during birth. Current research suggests that in some cases this may be due to abnormalities already present in the baby which affect the baby during the birth process
- in the period shortly after birth, if an infant develops a severe infection such as meningitis or encephalitis, which, in rare cases, may result in brain damage
- accidentally in the early years of life; for example, with a near drowning or car accident.

Ongoing research is vital for the management of CP. An Australian CP Register has been set up to record the incidence and will guide future research in prevention, intervention and service provision.

For further information and resources, see the fact sheets **Frequently Asked Questions** and **Resources**.

Each student with cerebral palsy has individual needs.  
In partnership with the student and their family,  
Cerebral Palsy Alliance team can advise on their needs.

# Frequently Asked Questions

General information on cerebral palsy can be obtained from the **What is Cerebral Palsy?** fact sheet

## Are there any other difficulties the student might have?

### ■ Learning difficulties

Students with cerebral palsy may experience specific learning difficulties. These may include a short attention span, motor planning difficulties (organisation and sequencing), perceptual difficulties and language difficulties. These may impact on learning to read, write and doing number activities. For more information see Learning issues fact sheet.

### ■ Intellectual difficulties

People with cerebral palsy vary widely in their intellectual capabilities. Some will show the same abilities as other people, despite their physical difficulties. Others will have some degree of intellectual disability, ranging from mild to significant.

Speech that is difficult to understand, saliva loss or the movements of students with cerebral palsy, may give the mistaken impression of an intellectual impairment.

### ■ Perceptual difficulties

Perception is the making sense of information gained from the senses. This enables students to do things such as move around obstacles, find their way around the school, judge size and shape of objects and understand how lines are connected to form letters. For those who experience these difficulties, their problems may not become apparent until school.

### ■ Communication/language difficulties

Students with cerebral palsy may have difficulties with understanding and expressing ideas. They may require support to follow instructions, construct sentences, give specific information or tell stories that make sense. If a student is having any of these difficulties, it may have an effect on learning.

### ■ Speech difficulties

Because the muscles of the mouth may be affected, some students may find talking difficult. For those with restricted speech, an alternative communication system may assist them (for example communication board, book or electronic device).

Speech that is difficult to understand is not necessarily an indication of intellectual impairment.

### ■ Eating and drinking difficulties

Cerebral palsy may affect the muscles that open and close the mouth and move the lips and the tongue. Some students may show difficulties in chewing and swallowing food and drink.



## ■ Saliva loss

Due to poor muscle control some students with cerebral palsy may have varying degrees of saliva loss (dribbling). The dribbling may be more noticeable when they are concentrating on a fine motor task.

## ■ Sensation

Loss of feeling (touch) may affect some students with cerebral palsy in their performance of both fine and gross motor tasks. This will depend on the degree of involvement of the limbs. This loss of feeling is often linked with a lack of awareness of their limbs and the student may need encouragement to use the limbs that are affected.

## ■ Vision

Some students may have visual impairments. One of these may be:

**Strabismus** (also known as 'turned eye' or 'squint') - One or both eyes are turned in or out and are prevented from working together. This may lead to double vision or focussing with one eye at a time.

## ■ Hearing

Some students with cerebral palsy may have a hearing loss.

## ■ Epilepsy

If this problem is present, the doctor may aim to control the seizures by choosing medicine that suits the student. It may be necessary to change the medication several times before the seizures are controlled. Sometimes they cannot be controlled.



## Will the student's condition change?

Cerebral palsy is a permanent condition. Students with cerebral palsy live with it all their lives. However, all students develop and learn as they grow and intervention can minimise the effect of the disability on their everyday life and encourage the student to reach their potential. It cannot however, cure cerebral palsy.

The damage to the brain early in life does not increase. However as with all students, students with cerebral palsy may have periods where progress appears to come to a standstill. This may be due to;

- **Expectations of others placed on the student.**

For a student with cerebral palsy, simple tasks may require more time to learn.

- **Illness**

- **Stress** (e.g. changes such as moving home, a new baby)

- **Epilepsy**

## Will the student have difficulties walking at school?

Students with cerebral palsy will vary greatly in their ability to move around the school environment. Some will need no extra support. Others may need Ankle Foot Orthoses (sometimes referred to as splints or AFO's) to help maintain balance when walking while others will use a walking frame or walking sticks. Some students may use a mixture of walking aids depending on the distance they need to move.

It may be difficult for the student to carry his/her school bag while using walking aids. Other students may use a wheelchair for mobility.

Frequently, adaptations will be made to the school's physical environment to make access easier for the student e.g. ramps, rails to classrooms and play areas.

Students may tire more than their peers and need more time to move from place to place. Some may also get clumsier and slower when they tire at the end of the day or at the end of the week.

## Will the student's speech improve?

Most students with cerebral palsy learn to talk, some students will not, and others will have some speech, but it may be difficult to understand them. Students who do not talk may have the skills to use augmentative / alternative communication such as a communication board (with pictures or symbols), signing or an electronic device that has a voice.

## Will the student be able to look after him or herself at school?

It is important to encourage the student to develop his/her daily living skills and allow the student to do as much as possible for him/herself e.g. buying food from the canteen or using the library. Some simple tasks may be difficult e.g. opening a lunch box or unzipping a school bag.

Students will range in their abilities to look after themselves. For some with severe difficulties, considerable assistance from others will always be needed. However, it is important to ask the student if help is needed.

## Will the student have difficulties with behaviour?

Cerebral palsy is a physical disability and is not strongly associated with particular behaviour problems. As with other areas, there are individual differences in the way that students behave and learn to cope with the day-to-day demands in their lives.

Some students do show frustration, as they are aware they cannot do the same as their peers or communicate their needs to others. Factors affecting this may be their ability to understand their difficulties and cope with these and differences between their cognitive and physical abilities. Sometimes these challenges can be emotionally overwhelming.

It is important that discussions are held with the student's family and relevant staff/carers to understand the appropriate behavioural expectations for the individual student.

All students need to be supported so that they function as members of their class and learn to participate appropriately within the school context.

## Will the student have a normal life expectancy?

Most students with cerebral palsy are healthy, and can expect a normal life span.

## What can the school do to help?

Students with cerebral palsy may learn to do things at school, which they have never done elsewhere. Copying other students and trying to conform to behavioural expectations of the whole group can greatly enhance a student's skills. Wanting to be like other students is a powerful motivator, which may not be available at home or in other settings.

### Suggestions to enhance a student's development:

- Remember a student with cerebral palsy is very much like any other student. The student gets the same enjoyment as other students from having friends and being accepted.
- Focus on what a student can do and the ways in which the student's capabilities can be developed to experience success and so develop a positive self-concept. See beyond the disability to the whole child.
- Encourage and explain to other students how it is important for the student with cerebral palsy to be as independent as possible.
- Allow the student the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the curriculum. Remain optimistic yet realistic about the student's progress.
- Work closely with parents and other professionals to help the student maximise his/her potential. A positive attitude will influence others, including all students.
- Become informed about cerebral palsy and the individual student's abilities, needs and interests.

## What supports are available to families and schools from Cerebral Palsy Alliance?

The Children's Services team at Cerebral Palsy Alliance works to provide a family centred service, which meets the particular needs of each student with cerebral palsy and his/her family. Services provided include information, support, therapy and educational programs and consultancy to schools. For more details on services – refer to the fact sheet "Children's Services" of Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

A program for each student and family is developed to meet the needs and priorities as identified by the family. Where required, this is done in consultation with the school.

Families can access these services by contacting Cerebral Palsy Alliance's information, referral, intake and planning unit, 'Pathways' on 1300 888 378.

More information about services can be obtained from the website of The Cerebral Palsy Alliance

[CerebralPalsy.org.au](http://CerebralPalsy.org.au)

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

These fact sheets are based on information in the following two publications and are reproduced with the permission of the publishers.

#### *Students with Special Needs*

Cerebral Palsy (1995)  
Low Incidence Support Centre,  
Queensland Department of Education,  
PO Box 33. Brisbane Albert Street, Queensland 4002

#### *Cerebral Palsy*

An Information Guide for Early Childhood Specialists (1996)  
Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia,  
106 Bradford Street, Coolbinia, Western Australia 6050

# Facilitating Successful Inclusion

The most important aims of including students with cerebral palsy into mainstream school settings are the development of social competence and self-esteem, and full access to the school curriculum.

Successful inclusion means being included in all the activities of the school setting including structured classroom activities, assembly, sport, library and playground times and transition between these activities.

As with any student, a student with cerebral palsy may develop at different rates in different areas of development. It is important to get to know the student's strengths and needs in all areas of development, as well as interests, likes and dislikes, to plan and support learning and to include the student as fully as possible.

It is advisable that families and all agencies involved, including school staff, work together in planning a smooth introduction to school life.

## Ideas to consider:

- Ensure that all school staff members involved in supporting the students are familiar with their strengths and needs. This reduces the students' dependence on any one staff member. Specific training may be needed for back up support staff e.g. teacher's aide ( special)
- Ensure that procedures for toileting and general assistance are documented for casual staff.
- Appropriate positioning of students with cerebral palsy enhances participation and maximises skill development, social interactions and independence. It also decreases the need for a constant 1:1 student staff ratio with them.
- It is important not to leave a student at the same activity or in the same position for extended periods (i.e. 20 to 30 minutes).
- Plan ahead by having any equipment or modifications that may be needed by the student ready at the appropriate activities e.g. modified switch at the computer. Also, ensure that all activities are easily accessible with clear spaces allowing access with a walking frame, wheelchair or sticks.
- Some students with cerebral palsy may not be motivated to participate in certain activities and may require some encouragement and modification to the curriculum.
- Provide opportunities to allow the student to participate as fully and independently as possible. Plan to allow learning and play without an adult always in the student's immediate proximity. This encourages other students to view the student in his / her own right as part of their group and provides opportunities for social interactions which may otherwise not occur.

- Students with cerebral palsy may need to be allowed more time to complete activities and to move from one activity to another. They may also need opportunities to demonstrate understanding in their own ways.
- As with all students at school, it is important to expect the students with cerebral palsy to follow the rules and routines of the class.



Each student with cerebral palsy has individual needs. In partnership with the student and their family, Cerebral Palsy Alliance team can advise on their needs.

# Learning Issues

A percentage of students including those with cerebral palsy may experience learning difficulties. It is important to consider that some students presenting with disruptive or avoidance behaviours and low self-esteem may have underlying learning problems. A student may show frustration as differences often become more apparent at school.

Learning situations need to be structured to provide opportunities for students to increase their self-esteem, sense of identity and belonging. Experiencing success increases the student's awareness of their own abilities and develops their bank of skills. Use the student's interests and strengths to encourage participation in activities.

The student may show difficulties in interacting with others, taking turns with peers or changing to a new activity. It also may be hard for students to understand consequences of actions or words. A well-planned, consistent program will need to be implemented to assist behaviour changes for the student.

## General learning issues

*Learning may be affected by difficulties in fine motor and gross motor coordination and communication.*

Students with cerebral palsy need to put more effort into concentrating on their movements and sequence of actions than others, so they may tire more easily.

It is important that concentrated activities in the day are broken up and that the student has times to move and not stay in the same seated position for long periods of time.

Consideration should also be given to planning activities requiring a lot of walking e.g. when going on excursions or to different areas of the school, as these may cause the student to fatigue and then be unable to concentrate on later activities.

### Fine motor / coordination

Difficulty with hand control may affect a student's abilities with handwriting, cutting, pasting or cooking activities. When handwriting, the student may be unable to keep the paper steady, set out work or complete work within a specific time.

It is important to evaluate what the student needs e.g. adapting equipment, assessing fine motor abilities. Refer to **Learning to Write**, **Ideas for Adapting Equipment** and **Using Technology** fact sheets for more details.

### Gross motor skills

Students will have varying degrees of difficulty with movement and postural control that may affect their ability when sitting or moving around the classroom.

If it takes too much effort the student may tire easily.

## Ideas to consider:

- Some students may need changes to their chair to give more postural support. See Sitting Posture fact sheet for further ideas.
- Allow more time for the student to learn new skills.
- Modify the activity so that the student can participate along with peers. See **Adapting Equipment** fact sheet for additional information.



## Specific learning issues

Some students with cerebral palsy may have specific difficulties in learning. These may include:

### 1. A short attention span

Some students may be more easily distracted and/ or unable to concentrate for as long as their peers.

### 2. Motor planning difficulties

Students who have motor planning problems know what they want to do but have difficulty planning how to go about it.

### 3. Perceptual difficulties

Some students may have difficulties with interpreting information from their senses. This can have an impact especially in the areas of reading and writing.

### 4. Communication/language difficulties

There may be difficulties with receptive and expressive communication skills such as understanding instructions, reading and initiating or maintaining communication.

**For more information on these specific learning issues see individual topic sheets on the following pages.**

## 1. A short attention span:

Some students may be more easily distracted and / or unable to concentrate for as long as their peers. It is important to have realistic expectations of what a student can achieve.

### Ideas to consider:

- Ensure correct seating so student's efforts are put into concentration rather than maintaining balance.
- Use the students' interests to motivate them to participate in activities.
- Seat the student close to and facing the front of the classroom. It is important that the student is looking at the teacher to attend to instructions.
- Break down activities into small steps.
- Gradually increase the length of time spent on each activity and at group times. Start with shorter times of concentrated effort.
- Plan to alternate periods of concentrated time with periods of activity.
- Limit distractions where possible – e.g. choose a relatively quiet place for demanding activities, have an uncluttered table, place the activity on a plain or dark coloured work surface
- Sit the student away from the main doorway or passages to reduce distraction.

**Each student with cerebral palsy has individual needs. In partnership with the student and their family, Cerebral Palsy Alliance team can advise on their needs.**

## 2. Motor planning difficulties:

Students who have motor planning problems know what they want to do but have difficulty planning in their minds how to go about it. Learning tasks can take more effort, concentration and energy and they may have difficulty generalising skills.

These students may be able to do some tasks automatically. However when they are requested to do something or are under pressure to perform, they may have difficulty planning and executing the task e.g. disorganised when changing for sport and in preparation for classroom activities.

They often seem to rush into activities without carefully planning the stages required in order to complete them.

### Ideas to consider:

- Break up complex activities into smaller, achievable steps. Give directions one at a time.
- Ensure a less complex activity is still challenging enough to encourage the student 's cooperation and interest.
- Encourage the student to stop and think first in order to plan what he/she has to do before starting the activity.
- Ensure the student knows what the outcome of the task should be.
- Encourage the student to identify a starting point and then to complete one step of the activity at a time, while verbalising each step in the sequence.
- Some students may need to have the activity demonstrated and may require some physical prompts initially. This assistance could be gradually withdrawn.
- Write instructions or steps down – use words or PCS (Picture Communication Symbols). The use of pictures or words in a sequence or timetable is a valuable cue to help students understand the sequence of steps involved in one or several activities or routines in the classroom.
- Try to establish regular routines in the day and for each activity he / she has to do in order to help motor planning eg. helping with classroom jobs.
- Practise and repeat the same sequences, so that the motor pattern is learned and becomes easier and more automatic.
- Praise success as well as effort and be specific about what is being praised. At first teachers may need to praise each step of a task to assist with understanding of the sequence of actions being learned.
- Difficulties with motor planning may be more marked when doing a new or unfamiliar activity or when in a new setting.

### Resource

More ideas and activities for students with motor planning and coordination difficulties can be obtained from:

**Watch Me - I can do it. Helping Children overcome clumsy and uncoordinated movements,** Cocks N, ISBN 0 - 73180578 - X

### 3. Perceptual difficulties

Some students may have difficulties with interpreting information from their senses; this includes activities such as copying words and numbers, judging the size and shape of objects, moving around obstacles, finding their way around the school, distinguishing between different sounds and understanding spatial positions. Perceptual difficulties impact on learning in all areas of development. Many students will have difficulties with reading, spelling and number work eg. with scanning and looking at pictures, words and diagrams.

#### Ideas to consider:

- Activities to develop visual perceptual skills include gross motor activities such as climbing frames, obstacle courses, tunnels, etc, and body awareness games.
- Copying block patterns and sequences, sorting and matching, dot to dot games, doing puzzles and “spot the difference” games can also help develop these skills.
- Copying from a paper alongside can be easier than from the board – use bigger print and larger spaces.
- Place the activity on a plain coloured placemat to reduce background clutter and help focus the student’s attention.
- Some students may benefit from extra table space to help organise themselves better.
- Activities to develop auditory perceptual skills include listening games like Sound Lotto “I hear”, “Simon says” which involve finding and identifying sounds and listening to instructions, rhymes, clapping to rhythms.
- Ensure students are sitting in a balanced position on the mat or a chair, to help them focus on an activity. Verbal reminders may be needed.
- Some students benefit from using a clipboard to hold their writing paper because the position of it can be altered.
- Consider using a slope board (angled surface) for the student to write on.
- Some students may be more successful with writing if they only need to complete the blanks on printed sheets or join the answer and question, instead of copying.
- Ensure the student is facing the front of the class or to a person speaking, to assist focusing on visual and auditory stimuli.
- Use a cut-out window to keep track of place on the page.

#### 4. Communication/language difficulties

There may be difficulties with understanding spoken and written language such as following instructions, understanding concepts and reading. Some students may also have difficulty with expressing themselves e.g. making a choice or request, naming objects, initiating or maintaining communication and finding the words they need. Sometimes these difficulties may go unrecognized especially if students become adept at watching and following their peers.

##### Ideas to consider:

- Simplify instructions by using simple language and breaking down instructions into smaller steps.
- Repeat instructions and provide additional cues such as gestures, pictures, written words or showing the student what to do. It may be helpful to ask the student to repeat the instruction.
- Encourage the student to ask for help if the instruction has not been understood.
- Encourage all attempts at communication and provide opportunities for the student to demonstrate understanding in his / her own way. Providing verbal / visual choices e.g. pictures or objects, for the student to use can facilitate communication.



# Talking About Disability in Your School

Discuss with the family of the student with cerebral palsy what information they would like shared about their child's disability with other students, staff and families.

Some parents may prefer not to do anything special.

## Sharing with your school community

- Discuss with the family, what terminology school staff may use with students and other adults - some families prefer general terms e.g. additional or special needs rather than naming the disability.
- Ask the student's family to write down some questions and answers about what they would like others to know about their child - this gives the family control over what is said to other parents/peers.
- Have information on cerebral palsy available for families to read / borrow. Ensure they are aware of the benefits of inclusion for all students eg. refer to **What is Cerebral Palsy?** fact sheet.
- A talk at a staff meeting by parents or therapy / educational staff may be useful.
- Some families may be concerned that their child will miss out because too much time will be given to the child with a disability - reassure them that this will not occur. There are benefits to all students in the class e.g. a teacher's aide will support the teacher not just work with the student with a disability.



## Things to do in the classroom:

### Talk about what different people:

- **Do well** e.g. painting, drawing, climbing, using a computer
- **Find hard to do** e.g. whistle, tie shoe laces, doing somersaults

### Talk about some people's **particular difficulties** and the things they **can do**.

This can apply to all students. What can help them to learn to do things as independently as possible?

e.g. cannot see but **can.....**

cannot walk but **learning to ...**

cannot talk but is **signing** (talk with hands) or **using a communication device**

Show and explain the use of any specific equipment the student may use e.g. communication device, walking frame. The student may like to help demonstrate these. If the student and family are willing, other students may like to try out the equipment under adult supervision.

### Read **books** about people with disability to the students

Particular ones that include cerebral palsy:

#### ***Why do some people use wheelchairs?***

Atkinson, M., (1997)  
Dorling Kindersley, London  
ISBN 0 7513 - 5603 - 4

#### ***Nicholas Nigel Norris***

Publication of The Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia, ( 2000)  
A story book and accompanying "CP and Me" workbook - pages can be adapted for individual classes

#### ***Hands up for Andie***

Palmer, B., (1998)  
Hemi-Help, Belfast, Northern Ireland  
Storybook for 7-11 year olds

#### ***What do we think about Disability?***

Powell, J.,(1998)  
Hodder Wayland, U.K.

## Ideas to consider when the student comes to your class

- It is important to focus on the positive aspects. Teachers should provide opportunities for the student to succeed and use his/her personal abilities in the classroom
- To promote the student's sense of his/her identity in the classroom, teachers can give classroom responsibilities e.g. class monitor. If the student cannot perform the usual class roster duties, the teacher can design jobs to fit the student's ability.
- To increase the student's self esteem, the student with cerebral palsy could assist a peer eg. with reading or be a buddy to a younger student.
- Teachers can model acceptance and appropriate interaction to the class and all students in the school.
- Small groups can be used to encourage peer interactions and cooperative learning.
- Some students can find the challenges they face to be emotionally overwhelming. A caring, supportive classroom environment where all students' attempts are encouraged and accepted would be beneficial.
- Encourage peers to include the student in their activities in the playground as well as in class, particularly in activities the student enjoys eg. the student could be a referee or keep the score in a game of handball.
- The buddy system can work well with the student, but all peers need to learn what the student can do and only help when really needed.
- Help the student learn to adjust to and understand their disability and cope with the individual challenges it may place on them in different areas of their lives.
- Keep the student's routine and expectations of them (as much as possible) the same as their peers e.g. If the student needs special scissors, keep them in the same place as other scissors so that they have to get them as their peers do. If the student has a modified worksheet, give it out at the same time as other students receive theirs.

See also **Resources** fact sheet

**Each student with cerebral palsy has individual needs.  
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Cerebral Palsy Alliance team can advise on their needs.**

## Communication

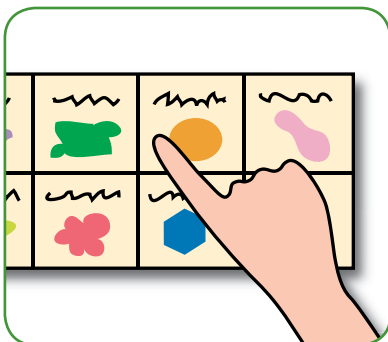
Communication is fundamental to the long-term independence and social competence of people. The ability to participate in active and interactive communication with peers and adults in the home, community and educational setting, is essential for a student to develop academically and emotionally.

Positive experiences of social interaction with others play a major role in the development of feelings of self worth and self-confidence in young children. Ensuring that students have ample opportunities to build social relationships, make choices, play 'leader' and talk with peers and teachers, is essential for building a student's sense of belonging and self esteem.

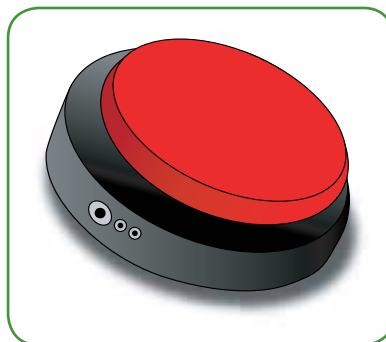
Some students with cerebral palsy communicate as easily as their peers. Others experience difficulties ranging from mild to severe, such as :

- Unclear speech or an inability to speak, due to difficulties with the movement of the muscles required for speech.
- Difficulties understanding and / or expressing ideas.

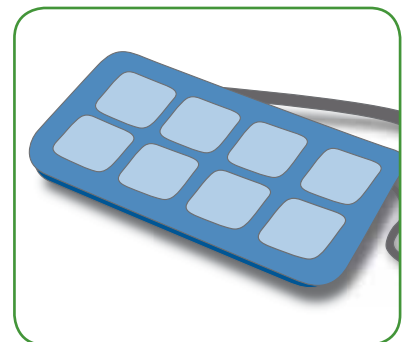
Many of these students may use augmentative and alternative communication systems. This means they supplement their speech with other systems, such as gestures, signs, facial expressions, picture boards, or communication devices with recorded speech. (see pictures below for some examples)



Symbol board



Big Mac voice output device



Communication device



An individual student may use a variety of communication systems. This is usually far more effective than the use of a single system. The systems chosen depend on the individual's situation, environment, needs and communication partners.

Augmentative communication systems aim to foster the following principles and skills:

- Encourage initiation of social interaction with peers.
- Develop independence.
- Provide opportunities to make choices and express feelings and ideas.
- Develop early language rules, such as what words mean, how new words sound, how new words can be made and how words can be combined together.
- Develop fundamental reading and spelling skills.
- Provide opportunities to retell stories and events.

## Technology for communication

Many students with cerebral palsy use speech as their primary means of communication. Students who find it difficult or are unable to use their speech may communicate in many different ways. For some of these students, the world of technology offers a wider range of communication options, making communication easier and more effective.

Low technology communication options are non-electronic and include things like communication boards, chat books, schedule boards, news books and conversation books. They may consist of real objects, symbols, photos, pictures or words.

High technology communication devices are electronic and range from very simple to complex. An example of a simple device is a small button that, when pressed, speaks a message recorded by the student's teacher or family, like a song or a question such as "Can I have a turn?"

A more complex communication device may have a touch screen, like a computer, that provides access to a large vocabulary and enables the student to create complex sentences and phrases using pictures and/or words. Often these devices have computer-generated speech.

Some devices can be used as both a communication aid and a writing tool.

### Ideas to consider when supporting a student's communication:

- Make sure that the student has their communication system with them at all times.
- Try not to anticipate their needs. Allow adequate time for them to respond and provide choices when appropriate.
- Encourage, respect and respond to all communication attempts made by the student.
- Ensure the student has access to appropriate vocabulary for a range of activities so that they can actively participate, make comments and ask and answer questions.
- Encourage peers to understand how the student communicates so that adult intervention is not always needed e.g. pointing / looking at pictures or using communication devices.
- Educate all people involved with the student in the use of their system(s).

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# Encouraging Independence

Students with cerebral palsy, just like any other students, vary with their motivation to be independent. Some want to do everything themselves while others are happy to have things done for them. However it is important that students have the opportunity to learn independence skills and participate in them as much as possible. At school, independence skills include going to the toilet, dressing and un-dressing, eating and drinking, managing a school bag, and transfers (i.e. moving from one position to another).

One of the most important things to remember is that students with cerebral palsy **need more time** to complete each task.

## Ideas to consider for toileting:

- Even being partially independent in toileting can be very important to a student's self esteem and confidence.
- Students will vary in their skills and may only be able to do some of the following. To be completely independent with using the toilet, a student needs to:
  1. **Be mobile - by walking (often with a walking frame) or driving a wheelchair**
  2. **Sit and come to a standing position**
  3. **Have some fine motor skills e.g. grasp and release skills**
  4. **Cope with fastenings like buttons and zippers**
  5. **Clean themselves**
  6. **Flush the toilet**
  7. **Wash and dry their hands.**
- Consider the least intrusive routine where privacy and dignity are maintained for the student e.g's. does the adult need to stay in the room or can the student meet the teacher's aide at the toilet door when finished rather than the aide going in to the room or call the aide when ready.
- The student needs to be well supported on the toilet to enable them to sit and balance safely.
- Some students may need special adaptations to the bathroom e.g. a specialised toilet seat or grab rails. An occupational therapist may need to be consulted for an assessment of what equipment is needed.
- Consider how the teacher's aide (special) will be accessed.

## Ideas to consider for dressing and undressing:

- Encourage families to consider roomy clothes for the student to make dressing easier e.g. trousers with elasticised waists are easier to pull up and down.
- Dress the side of the body that is weaker first and undress it last.
- If buttons and zips are difficult, encourage families to replace them with Velcro.
- Socks are easier to pull on if the teacher or teachers aide turns them inside out and pushes the toe back in towards the top.
- Shoelaces can be replaced with Velcro straps or elasticised laces.
- Check to see that the student is sitting in a stable position e.g. sitting on the floor may Expect the student to participate in the part of the task that is the easiest and gradually increase what is required as they accomplish each step.

## Ideas to consider for eating and drinking:

- All students should experience the opportunity of being part of a group during mealtimes. Ensure the student has opportunities for communication and make communication systems accessible where possible.
- Consider where the student will be eating their lunch and morning tea. Try to choose a seat and sitting area that will make it as easy as possible to manage their food and drink e.g. free from distractions, relaxed and comfortable but will encourage peer interaction
- Seating and positioning of the student
- Encourage families to consider wrappings that are easy to manage e.g. greaseproof paper is easier than Gladwrap. Try to separate the food into different bags e.g. one for lunch and another for morning tea.
- Encourage the use of lunch boxes and drink containers that are easy to open e.g. hinged lunch box.
- School bags can be difficult to manage – be aware that students may find it hard to manage zippers and straps for carrying.
- Some students with cerebral palsy may need extra time to complete their lunch and/or morning tea.



**Ideas to consider for transfers (moving from one position to another):**

- Encourage the student to assist with transfers as much as possible e.g. when moving from a chair to the floor. Chair glides may be considered to help move chair in and out easily. Rails and/or furniture may be required to help the student move from one position to another. Physiotherapists and occupational therapists can provide advice on ways to encourage independence.
- Set up the environment so that transfers are completed as safely and as easily as possible. Examples may include; placing a wheelchair as close as possible to where the student is transferring, considering stabilising chairs and the heights of table and chair needed to assist the student when pulling themselves up. Always work towards the student participating as much as they can in the process.
- Students who are unable to transfer on their own need to have a risk assessment completed by a physiotherapist or occupational therapist. This is to ensure that transfers are completed in the safest way possible.

**Ideas to consider for mobility (moving around the school):**

- For students who use a wheelchair as well as a walker for mobility, encourage use of the walker as much as possible. Incorporate the use of the walker into functional activities such as walking to the bathroom or walking between the classroom and playground.
- Physical education and sport sessions may also be good times to encourage practice with walking or mobility equipment e.g. walking aid or wheelchair.
- A physiotherapist can assist you in modifying sports sessions to include the student with cerebral palsy.

Refer to fact sheet **Sport and Physical Education** for more ideas.

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## Learning to Write

Learning to write is one of the most complex skills to learn, especially for students with a physical disability. Writing involves the ability to co-ordinate several skills at once including physical (e.g. posture, hand strength), sensory (e.g. vision, touch), perception (e.g. visual and body perception) and cognitive (e.g. memory and attention). If only one of these skills is affected, the ability to write may be compromised.

Should a student have difficulties with learning to write, all of these underlying skills necessary for writing need to be assessed to find out if and/or where the problem areas are.

Some students may be able to write a little, but need other ways to record their work and express their thoughts and ideas. Providing prepared notes or handouts for the student, use of a computer or a scribe are just some of the many strategies available.

Students may also need extra time to complete their written work and emphasis on quality rather than quantity is important.

Some written work activities may also need to be simplified or modified to the student's level of ability.



Listed below are some of the many skills needed to learn to write including ideas to work on if necessary:

## 1. Physical skills

muscle tone, posture, arm and hand stability, hand strength, fine motor skills, hand dominance, co-ordination, eye movements

### Ideas to consider:

- Check sitting position and posture (see Sitting Posture Fact Sheet)
- Use a sloped writing board to prevent student leaning over their work
- Try a variety of different sized and shaped pencils and pens to see what is most comfortable (See Ideas for adapting equipment fact sheet)
- Provide opportunities to practice fine motor tasks
- Encourage use of two hands with the assisting hand used to steady the paper
- Use different media to develop the student's motivation and confidence e.g. chalk board/ white board as writing is easily rubbed off or textas not pencils (if appropriate) as there is less friction.

## 2. Motor planning

some students may have the physical ability to perform the task but have difficulty organising and planning the necessary movements

### Ideas to consider:

- Break activity down and teach one step at a time
- Encourage the student to say what he/she is doing
- Draw/make letters using different mediums e.g. play dough
- Provide physical assistance e.g. hand over hand to demonstrate the required movements. Reduce this to hand on wrist then elbow then just guiding.
- Start by the student drawing between 2 lines/tracks then tracing over dotted lines. Then draw something while the student watches so they imitate you rather than copy. Use consistent verbal script for letter formation. Remind the student which direction to go in when writing.

## 3. Visual motor skills

the ability to copy unfamiliar patterns or shapes.

### Ideas to consider

- Making shapes/letters out of play dough or pipe cleaners to help understand how they are formed
- Tracing over the lines using a finger only and then tracing using a pencil
- Describing what the letter looks like e.g. 'a' is a circle with a short stick.
- Asking the student to talk about the direction of the lines as they draw the letter.
- Ensuring that the student understands the terms down, across, join etc.

## 4. Visual perception

the ability to interpret and understand what we see. Includes skill such as remembering sequences, finding similarities and differences between objects and finding details in a picture.

### Ideas to consider

- Use handouts to supplement board work
- Use auditory information to support visual
- Simplify information presented on the blackboard e.g. use of spacing, sequencing and numbering.
- Avoid writing that goes over pictures and cluttered worksheets
- Present small amounts of work at a time
- Consider the student's position in the classroom – front row may eliminate distractions from other children
- Use contrasting colours for different paragraphs or group of items
- Use a copy holder on a child's desk rather than asking that they copy all the writing from the board
- Use a cardboard window to focus attention on the specific sums or piece of writing that a child is copying from

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# Sitting Posture

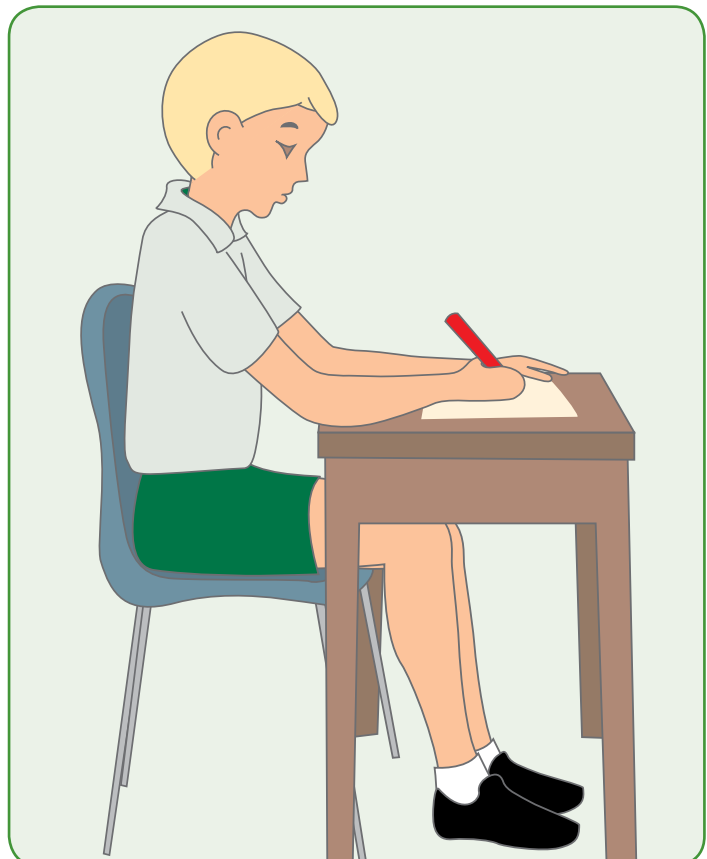
Students spend a good proportion of their time at school sitting in a chair at a desk to complete tasks. Good sitting posture and furniture of the appropriate size is essential for the student's participation successfully in class activities. Good sitting posture will prepare the student for the physical and cognitive demands of class work and will also reduce hand and postural fatigue experienced by many students with cerebral palsy.

## The principles of a good sitting posture include:

- Pelvis: Symmetrical and upright with bottom well back in the seat
- Hips: Flexed (bent) at 90 degrees
- Spine: Symmetrical with normal curves preserved
- Head: upright and symmetrical, not leaning over desk
- Knees: Flexed at 90 degrees and thighs well supported on the seat
- Feet: At 90 degrees to shin and flat on the floor
- A table at the correct height is essential. Ensure the student can rest their elbows comfortably on the table at approximately 90 degrees

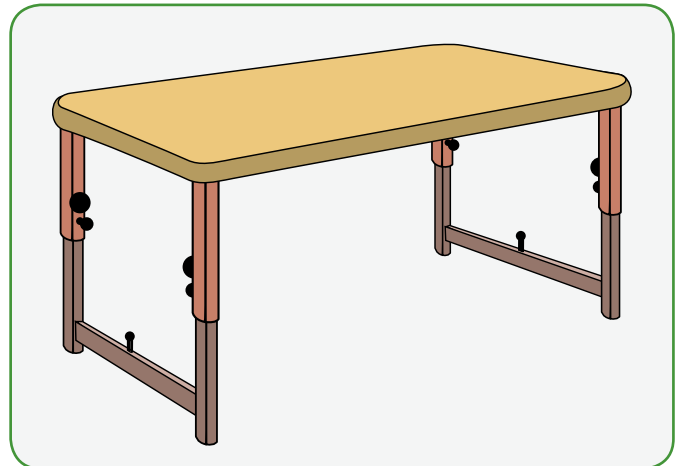
When the students sit on the floor, a good sitting posture is again encouraged for stability and balance. Some good positions include: side sitting, cross-legged or straight-legged sitting. Sitting in the "W" position or frog sitting should be strongly discouraged as it stops the hips and knees developing correctly.

Some students with cerebral palsy need to have modifications to their school chair so that they can sit well during the day and concentrate on their school lessons. This may include posture cushions; a pelvic belt, side supports or foot rests.





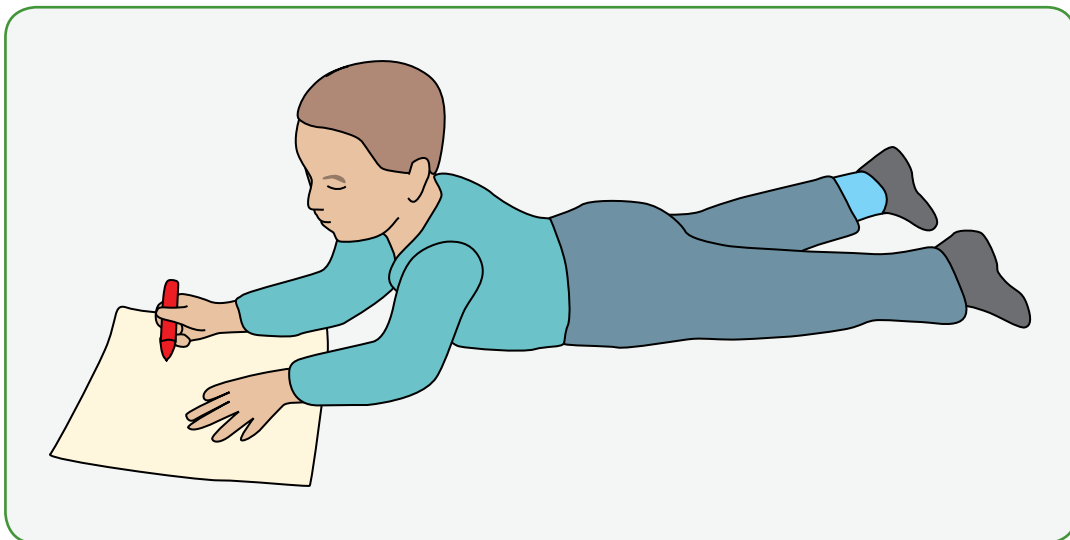
Some students may require a more specialised chair and the student's therapy team can help you to become familiar with different types of chairs. Other students may need to sit in their wheelchair. Adjustable height tables may also be necessary to ensure that the height of the desk is appropriate to suit the student's needs.



Whenever possible students with cerebral palsy should sit at the same level and with their peers in the group. Avoid having the student sitting at a table on their own all of the time. It can be difficult at times when a student's wheelchair or specialised chair is high from the ground and other alternative seating is not suitable. In this case, consideration is needed to plan an activity for students using alternative positions other than sitting during the school day. For example: all students painting at an easel either standing or using special standing equipment, or drawing on sheets of paper on the floor with all students lying on their stomachs.

As with all class members, students should be encouraged to sit facing the teacher at the front reducing the amount of extra movements required to attend or copy from the board. Some students may need to sit in a specific place due to sensory disturbances, for example a visual impairment.

Overall, students who are sitting well will be in an optimum position to concentrate and attend to class activities. Students will have a better opportunity to use their hands well for handwriting, two-handed and computer tasks, as they are able to work from a stable base of support.



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# Suggestions for School Excursions

School excursions are an important part of school life. In order to ensure that students with cerebral palsy will be able to take part in a school excursion safely and successfully, careful thought needs to go into the planning of each excursion. It is important to involve the student's family in these discussions.

## Factors to consider:

### Transport

- Are they ideally able to travel with other students in the school bus?
- Does special transport (disabled bus or taxi) need to be organised for the student to travel in their wheelchair?
- If specialised transport is needed, who will travel with them?
- Can their equipment be transported safely?

### Access around the site

- Are there stairs, rough ground or steep slopes?
- Is it wheelchair accessible?
- What form of mobility aid/s available to the student is the most suitable – walking sticks/ frame, manual wheelchair or powered wheelchair / scooter?
- If two types of mobility aids are to be taken, is there a means of storing this or transporting it around the venue?
- Will the venue be crowded, which would make walking unsafe?

### Fatigue levels

- Are the distances, or time involved likely to cause excessive fatigue?
- For students who normally walk, will they need a wheelchair to cover long distances?

### Time factor

- If the student walks or self propels their wheelchair, will they be able to keep up with the other students?
- Does additional time need to be set aside for toileting, mealtime assistance or communication?

## Toileting

- Are disabled toilet facilities required and available?
- Are two people required to assist with toileting safely?
- Is a change table or hoist required? Are they available at the site?

## Equipment

- If the student has a powered wheelchair or scooter, is the battery fully charged?
- Is there a procedure in the event of equipment failure? e.g. flat tyre or battery, spare wheel

## Mealtime assistance

- Does the student require assistance?
- If the student is tube fed, are there suitable facilities to allow this?
- Does the student need specific mealtime equipment? e.g. spoons, cups
- Does the student have a mealtime plan? e.g. do they have thickened foods

## Support required

- Does the student require 1:1 supervision or can they be supervised as part of a group of students?
- If a carer is needed, it is important to also consider their needs:
- Will they need a break?
- Is there someone who can relieve them for lunch and toilet breaks?
- Have they been trained in the required skills- e.g. for transfers, toileting, mealtime assistance and communication?

## Communication needs

- If the student uses a communication system, are additional supports required to cover the topics involved in the excursion?
- Does the student have an adequate expressive system and / or identification to communicate with unfamiliar people (e.g. in case of becoming lost from the group)?
- Does the student have their communication system with them?

Please don't be discouraged by this list. Well-planned excursions can be a wonderful time for all involved.



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# Sport & Physical Education

As with all other areas of school life, it is important that students with cerebral palsy are provided with the opportunity to take part in sport and physical education (PE) together with the rest of their peers. With some preparation and modifications to the activity, a student with cerebral palsy can participate and achieve success during sport.

Active involvement in sports provides the unique opportunity to enjoy sport as either a participant or knowledgeable spectator throughout one's whole life. School sport is not only a chance to be active but also a social time where skills such as teamwork and leadership are learnt.

## Ideas to consider:

- Involve the student with cerebral palsy in deciding how an activity can be modified, if they have difficulty with the skills required. Sometimes the child may just need extra practise at the basic skills, with consistent verbal prompts or hand over hand assistance to learn the actions of the sport.
- Focus on the student's abilities.
- The equipment used can be modified. For example, the ball can be stabilised (suspended or placed on a tee) or modified (consider size, weight, firmness); add extra grips to the handle of a bat/ racket to make them easier to hold. Please note if making/ modifying equipment, you may need to check with the relevant educational authority, as there are safety requirements/ guidelines.
- The movement in the activity can be modified so that it is harder for the able-bodied participants. For example, in the game 'stuck in the mud', running can be replaced with skipping; students can take turns being disadvantaged in some way- such as wearing a blindfold; tying their legs together.
- The space parameters or distances of an activity can be modified. For example, the field of play can be reduced for students who tire easily.
- The rules of the game can be modified. For example, in netball, allow students more time to throw the ball.
- The number of participants in teams can be changed to even out differing levels of ability.
- Change the scoring system. Simplify, or don't keep score at all. Keep individualised scores/ times for children so that they are competing only against their personal best.
- Pair the student with cerebral palsy with a more able-bodied student who can assist them in carrying out the skill. For example, the buddy can push the wheelchair in a relay or race.
- Allow students to be referees or scorers for part of the game if they tire easily.
- Consider the most appropriate piece of equipment for students to participate in. Will they find it easier being in their walker, standing frame or their wheel chair?

## Resources

**For more ideas on how to modify sport / P.E.**

### ***Active Australia Schools Network***

Active Australia is the national initiative designed to encourage more Australians to become more physically active. Joining the Schools Network can offer support in areas such as professional development and resource material.

Contact: National Coordinator Active Australia Schools, Tel: (08) 8340 3388

### ***All kids- all sports: inclusion in sport*** (2002), (CD Rom)

produced by the Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia

<http://www.cpawa.com.au>.

### ***Give it a go: including people with disabilities in sport and physical activity*** (Manual)

produced by the Australian Sports Commission (2001)

Tel: (02) 6214 1912

### ***Ideas to promote inclusion in sports carnival.***

This handout from Cerebral Palsy Alliance is available from the student's physiotherapist.

### ***Participation in Physical Education*** (1992)

Kids First Publications, The Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia

Available from the student's physiotherapist

### ***Ten top tips for including students with differing abilities in physical education***

Handout produced by Ken Black (2002)

Disability Sport Unit, Australian Sports Commission, Tel: (02) 6214 1415

***Willing and Able*** is a project of the Australian Sports Commission's Disability Education Program.

They run a series of workshops designed to help teachers to include students with disabilities in sport and physical activity. Tel: (02) 9454 0109

### ***Dsport*** (formerly NSW Sports Council for the Disabled)

NSW organisation offering a range of community-based sport and recreational activities for people with a disability. Tel. (02) 9763 2455

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# Ideas for Adapting Equipment

The aim for students, including those with cerebral palsy is to participate in the class routines, play with other children and have a wide variety of educational learning experiences. Students all work towards becoming more independent and they need optimal opportunities to learn new skills.

Sometimes it may be necessary to make some changes to equipment and plan how materials are presented so that students with cerebral palsy can participate in all parts of each lesson. At times the same equipment can be used but the student may need some help to get them set up ready to start, or some verbal or physical prompts to make sure they can keep going with the task.

In each lesson, ensure the students are sitting or standing well, depending on the activity, with a good posture and balance. For some students with cerebral palsy setting up the lesson well with careful planning will enable them to complete the task successfully with reduced help. This leads on to a greater feeling of confidence to attempt another new task.

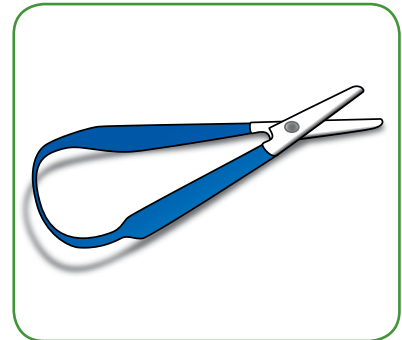
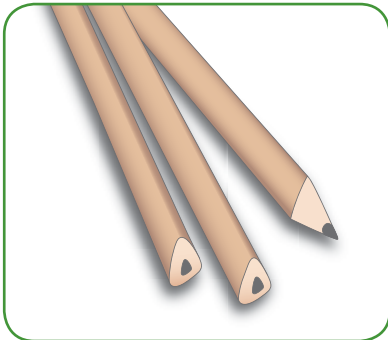
## Ideas to consider:

### Writing:

- Pencils and textas with a larger diameter are easier to hold. They are easier to hold because they open up the space between the thumb and index fingers allowing the student to use their fingertips more readily.
- Correct fitting furniture i.e. chair and table is essential
- Non slip mat (dycem) can be used to help stabilise the paper
- Some students who have difficulty with pencil control may benefit from using a pencil grip
- Students are encouraged to steady the paper with their non-dominant hand. A stabilising bar on the table that the student can hold or an adjustable height table could enable the student to put weight through their arms. This could assist students to maintain both hands on the table.
- Slope boards can help students who lean excessively over their work or have some visual problem with seeing their work flat on the table. Slope boards can also help left-handers to be able to see their work easier as a vertical surface can help to reorientate and straighten their wrist.

**Using scissors:**

- There are a number of scissors available that a student may use if they cannot manipulate ordinary scissors. These include: spring loaded loop scissors, mounted scissors and self-opening scissors.
- A weight or specially made assistive device can be used to stabilise the paper for cutting when the student is only able to use one hand well.

**Using a ruler:**

Rulers can be adapted for students who have restricted use of their hands or for those who are unable to stabilise the ruler and draw a line. Some ideas for adapting rulers include: attaching door handles or knobs to make the ruler easier to hold and lining the base of the ruler with non slip matting or using magnets to hold the ruler in place as appropriate.

**“Technical Aid to the Disabled (NSW)”** has some great ideas on how to adapt equipment for the student to use within the classroom. They can be contacted on (02) 9808 2022 or Cerebral Palsy Alliance therapists can help you to make contact with this service.

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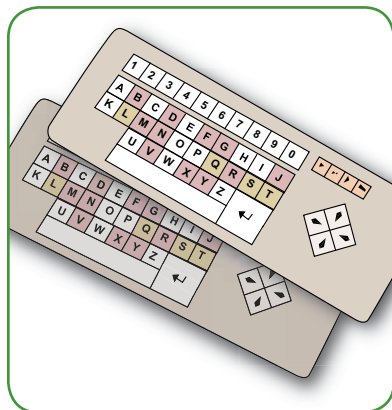
## Using Technology

Many students with cerebral palsy benefit from using technology equipment to assist with their learning and communication. Examples of technology equipment include using a communication aid or using a computer or note taker to help with their written work, as well as literacy and numeracy skills. The use of communication aids is discussed in the **Communication fact sheet**.

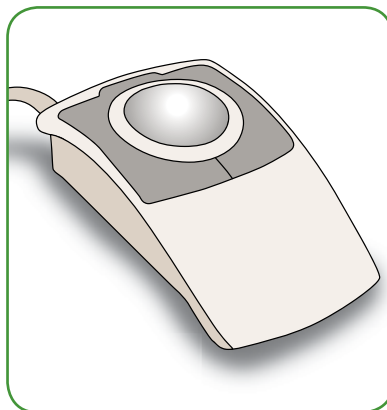
Some students need their own computer or other alternatives to handwriting while others can access the classroom computer. Students with cerebral palsy may need to use a computer for the following reasons:

- To help with poor handwriting skills
- To develop the ability to present work effectively
- To help develop organisational skills
- To assist with literacy and numeracy skills
- As a learning medium for attention and concentration difficulties

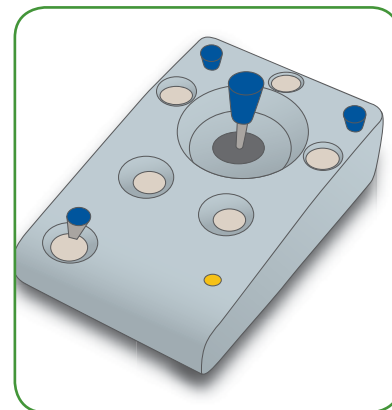
If a student cannot access a standard mouse or keyboard, they may require an assessment by an occupational therapist to look at an alternative option. These options include using a switch or a different sized mouse or different keyboard options. Some examples are provided below:



Bigkeys



Kidtrack mouse



Penny and Giles mouse

There are also many software options available for students with cerebral palsy who have specific learning needs. Some software packages include using pictures and symbols as well as words to teach literacy skills.



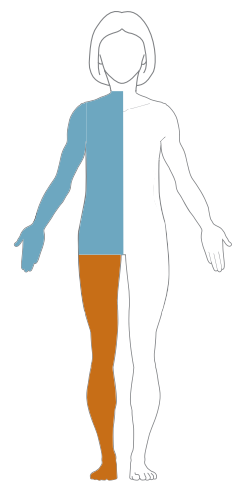
## Hemiplegia

Hemiplegia is a type of cerebral palsy which affects one side of the body, most noticeably voluntary movements of the arm, hand, leg or foot. It may impact on the stability of the trunk, and the student may tend to lean to one side. The student may also have difficulties with eating, saliva control, speech or vision.

As the student grows, muscle imbalance can become more noticeable, especially during growth spurts. Students may need to wear splints on their arms and legs or have Botox™ injections to reduce muscle tightness and help improve their walking or hand skills.

### Students with hemiplegia tend to:

- Have muscle imbalances, which can impair voluntary movements, balance and coordination.
- Have alterations in muscles tone. This can vary from floppy (low tone) to tight (high tone) muscles.
- Neglect or have poor awareness of the affected side
- Overuse their 'good' side.
- Take longer to master motor skills and may be slower to perform activities.
- Easily trip or fall and have slower protective responses when falling.



hemiplegia

### Other effects of hemiplegia may include:

- Altered sensation on the affected side (e.g. decreased or heightened sensitivity to pain or touch)
- Perceptual and motor planning difficulties (see Learning Issues Factsheet 4)
- Behavioural difficulties such as anxiety, frustration, distractibility and reduced concentration spans
- Difficulty with organising and managing themselves due to limited hand/arm function
- Poor quality of movement, e.g. tendency to move too quickly during activities
- Difficulty with two-handed movements, e.g. cutting and catching a ball.

## Ideas to consider:

### In general...

- Allow more time for students to settle in to school, consider extended orientation
- Encourage independence and participation in all aspects of school routines
- Leave extra time for the student to move around school, especially for stairs and longer distances
- A ground floor classroom is worth consideration
- It is helpful if new tasks can be broken down into smaller parts and practiced individually before being put back together
- You may need to modify the way the student manages their belongings (e.g. different school bag, reducing load of bag)
- Extra planning may be required for school excursions (Factsheet 10)
- Flexible attitudes to uniform requirements (e.g. Velcro shoes).

### Managing schoolwork...

- Encourage a symmetrical sitting position at the desk or on the floor. This minimises the student's need to use extra energy to maintain their posture. This will also improve attention and fine motor control (see Seating Factsheet 9)
- Place the student's desk facing the teacher and near the front of the class to minimise distractions
- Leave adequate space on desk top for affected arm
- Stabilise paper and desk top activities with non-slip matting
- Curriculum may need to be modified to ensure success in tasks. A student may need to be given less work to complete in the same time as peers
- Encourage students to use two hands together in class work, e.g. steadying the paper while writing
- Provide extra time if needed to complete tasks.

### Moving about...

- Encourage participation in all PE/sport/playground activities. You may need to modify the activity, and plan for more support and time (Factsheet 11)
- Because of balance difficulties, consider spacing between furniture in the classroom and be aware of trip hazards (e.g. mats, uneven playground surfaces)
- Encourage students to use two hands together in sport, play, eating and dressing, and to use both sides of their body in PE and gross motor activities (e.g. ballgames, climbing)
- Students should be encouraged to stand with their weight evenly distributed on both feet and front on to the activity they are performing.
- Remember that students with hemiplegia use more energy than their peers to achieve the same goals and will tire more easily

**Each student with cerebral palsy has individual needs. In partnership with the student and their family, Cerebral Palsy Alliance team can advise on their needs.**

# Resources

There are a number of resources that may be helpful to use in schools.

## Websites about cerebral palsy

### Cerebral Palsy Alliance

The website of Cerebral Palsy Alliance in NSW. This information-packed website features fact sheets and brochures about various aspects of cerebral palsy, a glossary of terms, recommended reading, an extensive links page and a full list of Cerebral Palsy Alliance services.

[CerebralPalsy.org.au](http://CerebralPalsy.org.au)

### SCOPE

The United Kingdom's national disability organisation whose focus is people with cerebral palsy. This excellent site contains a wealth of information for people with cerebral palsy, their families, carers and disability providers. Features include a vast range of fact sheets. e.g. education and training, information about current research, frequently asked questions, services, and discussion rooms on various practical topics.

[www.scope.org.uk/](http://www.scope.org.uk/)

### United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UPA)

The UPA is the second largest health charity in the United States of America. The site includes What's New, Innovative Projects and Research sections. The research section contains fact sheets designed to inform professionals and the public about recent medical findings, treatments and therapies related to developmental disabilities. Other related topics are education, sports and leisure.

[www.ucpa.org/main.cfm/1](http://www.ucpa.org/main.cfm/1)

### National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

The website of this United States of America based institute contains a basic guide to cerebral palsy including what is cerebral palsy, associated conditions, causes, risk factors, early signs, diagnosis, treatment and research.

[www.ninds.nih.gov/health\\_and\\_medical/pubs/cerebral\\_palsyhtr.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/pubs/cerebral_palsyhtr.htm)

## American Academy for Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine

[www.aacpdm.org](http://www.aacpdm.org)

## Hemihelp

An organisation in the United Kingdom supporting people with hemiplegia and their families. Leaflets available on a range of topics and suggested books relevant to schools.

[www.hemihelp.org.uk](http://www.hemihelp.org.uk)

## The Centre for Cerebral Palsy, Western Australia

Details of services, publications and information about cerebral palsy

[www.tccp.com.au](http://www.tccp.com.au)

## The Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland

Services are provided to children and adults with cerebral palsy and related disabilities and their families in Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

[www.qldswl.org.au](http://www.qldswl.org.au)

## Videos

### Equal Chances

An initiative of The Cerebral Palsy Association of Western Australia Ltd

Produced by: The Media Production Unit, Edith Cowan University, WA, 1994 (15 mins)

This video shows students with cerebral palsy participating in school life with peers and teachers. The causes and types of cerebral palsy are discussed and the ways that teachers and therapists work together to achieve positive outcomes for students are shown.

### Kids in Wheelchairs

Learner Managed Designs Inc USA 1995 (12 mins)

This video is an introduction to school - age students to the experiences of students who use wheelchairs. During the video students address some of the feelings they have to wheelchair users, while students in wheelchairs explain why they use a wheelchair and how it works. Classmates and friends of students with disabilities will benefit from building positive attitudes and friendly relationships.

[www.imdusa.com/studentseries/](http://www.imdusa.com/studentseries/)

## Support services

### Technical Aid to the Disabled (TAD)

TAD makes and supplies custom designed aids where commercial equipment is not suitable. Information on aids and technology is also provided.

[www.tadaustralia.org.au](http://www.tadaustralia.org.au)

### Australian Sports Commission

Contact the Disability Education Program Coordinator, Ph: (02) 9454 0109

### Access and Participation Team

Is part of The Disability Programs and aims to work collaboratively with school education areas and schools to support students with complex disabilities who have high support needs, across all school settings within The Department of Education and Training.

To access the team, contact local area's Disability Programs Consultant.

### Independent Living Centre

An information centre about equipment and products for daily living.

Ph: (02) 9808 2233 or 1300 885 886

Fax: (02) 9809 7132 or (02) 9890 0966

[www.ilcnsw.asn.au](http://www.ilcnsw.asn.au)

### Cerebral Palsy Alliance

Organisation offering a range of services and information to students with cerebral palsy and their families in NSW.

Ph: (02) 9479 7200

[CerebralPalsy.org.au](http://CerebralPalsy.org.au)

### NSW Wheelchair Sports Association

Provides sporting opportunities for wheelchair users throughout NSW.

PO Box 3244 Putney NSW 2112, Ph: (02) 9809 5260

## Books and manuals

Books to use with students in the school

### Hands up for Andie

Brenda Palmer, HemiHelp, Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1998.  
 Storybook for 7 to 11 years.  
 Can be ordered through The Cerebral Palsy Association of WA.

### Nicholas Nigel Norris

Storybook for 5 to 8 years students and accompanying 'CP and Me' Workbook is available from The Cerebral Palsy Association of WA, PO Box 61 Mt Lawley WA 6929

### Why do Some People use Wheelchairs

Mary Atkinson, Dorling Kindersley, London, 1997, ISBN 0 7513 5603 4

### What do we think about Disability?

Jillian Powell  
 Questions and answers around different disabilities and ways students can help.  
 Extra ideas for teachers offered too.  
 Hodder Wayland, UK, 1998, ISBN 0 7502 32528

## General information books and manuals

### Physical As Anything

Available from NSW Department of Education, (1996)  
 Collaborative support for students with physical disabilities and medical conditions. Provides a range of these with a focus on the educational implications of each. There is a brief section on cerebral palsy.

### 'Give it a Go' Manual

Including people with disabilities in sport and physical activities. Helping people with disability to participate in sport at school.  
 Available from Australian Sports Commission  
 Ph: (02) 6214 1912 Fax: (02) 6214 1995  
 ISBN 1 74013 049 9

### Watch Me – I can do it

Helping Children overcome clumsy and uncoordinated movements, Neralie Cocks  
 Written primarily to assist students with developmental coordination disorder but ideas can be used for students with cerebral palsy.  
 ISBN 0 73180578 X

## **Children with special needs: cerebral palsy**

Queensland Department of Education, 1995  
Available through Access Ed, Ph: (07) 3406 2532  
ISBN 0 7242 5997 X

## **Facing the Crowd: Managing other people's insensitivities to your disabled child**

P Cronin and D Fullwood, Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind Melbourne, 1986  
While written for families this book may also give teachers valuable information on managing community insensitivities towards disability.